

Readings AP European History and the French Revolution

Robespierre, p. 589 of textbook

Edmund Burke Reflections

De Gouges – Women's Rights

St. Just- Republicanism

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Gracchus Babeuf- Manifesto of Equality

Metternich- Memoirs p. 635 textbook.

Burke, Edmund, excerpts from Reflections on the French Revolution

When I see the spirit of liberty in action, I see a strong principle at work; and this, for a while, is all I can possibly know of it. The wild gas, the fixed air is plainly broke loose: but we ought to suspend our judgments until the first effervescence is a little subsided, till the liquor is cleared, and until we see something deeper than the agitation of the troubled and frothy surface. I must be tolerably sure, before venture publicly to congratulate men on a blessing, that they have really received one. Flattery corrupts both the receiver and the giver; and adulation is not of more service to the people than to kings. I should therefore suspend my congratulations on the new liberty of France, until I was informed how it had been combined with government; with public force; with the discipline and obedience of armies; with the collection of an effective and well-distributed revenue; with the solidity for property; with peace in order; with civil and social manners. All these (in their way) are good things to; and, without them, liberty is not a benefit while it lasts, and is not likely to continue long. The effect of liberty to individuals is, that they may do what they please: we ought to see what it will please them to do, before we risk congratulations, which may soon be turned into complaints. Prudence would dictate this in the case of separate insulated private men; but liberty, when men act in bodies, is power. Considerate people, before they declare themselves, will observe the use which is made of power; and particularly of so trying a thing as new power in new persons, of whose principals, tempers, and dispositions, they have little or no experience, and in situations where those who appear the most stirring in the scene may possibly not be the real movers. . . .

The age of chivalry is gone. -- That of sophisters, economists, and calculators, has succeeded; and the glory of Europe is extinguished forever. Never, never more, shall we behold a generous loyalty to rank and sex, that proud submission, that dignified obedience, that subordination of the heart, which kept alive, even in servitude itself, the spirit of an exalted freedom. The unbought grace of life, achieved defensive nations, the nurse of the manly sentiment and heroic enterprise is gone! It is gone, that sensibility of principle, that chastity of honor, which felt a stain like a wound, which inspired courage while it mitigated ferocity, which ennobled whatever it touched, and under which vice itself lost half its evil, by losing all its grossness. . . .

But now all is to be changed. All the pleasing illusions, which made power gentle, and obedience liberal, which harmonized the different shades of life, and which, by a bland the simulation, incorporated into politics the sentiments which beautify and soften private society, are to be dissolved by this new conquering empire of light

and reason. All the decent drapery of life is to be rudely torn off. All the super-added ideas, furnished from the wardrobe of a moral imagination, which the heart owns, and the understanding ratifies, as necessary to cover the defects of her naked shivering nature, and to raise it to dignity in our own estimation, are to be exploded as ridiculous, absurd, and antiquated fashion.

On this scheme of things, a king is but a man; a queen is but a woman; a woman is but an animal; and an animal not of the highest order. . . . On the scheme of this barbarous philosophy, which is the offspring of cold hearts and muddy understandings, and which is as void of solid wisdom, as it is destitute of all taste and elegance, laws are to be supported only by their terrors, and by the concern, which each individual may find in them, from his own private speculations, or even spare to them from his own private interests. In the groves of their academy, at the end of every vista, you see nothing but the gallows. . . . When the old feudal and chivalrous spirit of Fealty, which, by freeing kings from fear, freed both kings and subjects from the precautions of tyranny, shall be extinct in the minds of men, plots and assassinations will be anticipated by preventive murder and preventive confiscation, and that long roll of grim and bloody maxims, which form the political code of all power, not standing on its own honor, and the honor of those who are to obey it. Kings will be tyrants from policy when subjects are rebels from principle. . . .

To make a government requires no great prudence. Settle the seat of power; teach obedience: and the work is done. To give Freedom is still more easy. It is not necessary to guide; and only requires to let go the rein. But to form a free government; that is, to temper together these opposite elements of liberty and restraints in one consistent work, requires much thought, deep reflection, a sagacious, powerful, and combining mind. This identifying to those who take the lead in the National Assembly. Perhaps they are not so miserably deficient as they appear. I rather believe it. It would put them below the common level of human understanding. But when the leaders choose to make themselves bidders at an auction of popularity, their talents, and the construction of the state, will be of no service. They will become flatterers instead of legislators; the instruments, not the guides, of the people. If any of them should happen to propose a scheme of liberty, soberly limited, and defined with proper qualifications, he will be immediately outbid by his competitors, who will produce something more splendidly popular. Suspensions will be raised of his fidelity to his cause. Moderation will be stigmatized as the virtue of cowards; and compromise as the prudence of traders; until, in hopes of preserving the credit which may enable him to temper, and moderate, on some occasions, the popular leader is obliged to become active in propagating doctrines, and establishing powers, that will afterwards defeat any sober purpose at which he ultimately might have aimed.

The improvements of the National Assembly are superficial, their errors are fundamental.

[Source: Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, in *The Works of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke*, vol. 2 (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1864), pp. 515-516. There is also a hypertext version of Burke's *Reflections*.]

Modern History Sourcebook: Olympe de Gouge: Declaration of the Rights of Women, 1791

Olympe de Gouges, a butcher's daughter, proved to be one of the most outspoken and articulate women revolutionaries. In 1791 she wrote the following declaration, directly challenging the inferiority presumed of women by the Declaration of the Rights of Man. Her attempts to push this idea lead to her being charged with treason during the rule of the National Convention. She was quickly arrested, tried, and on November 3, 1793, executed by the guillotine.

Woman, wake up; the tocsin of reason is being heard throughout the whole universe; discover your rights. The powerful empire of nature is no longer surrounded by prejudice, fanaticism, superstition, and lies. The flame of truth has dispersed all the clouds of folly and usurpation. Enslaved man has multiplied his strength and needs recourse to yours to break his chains. Having become free, he has become unjust to his companion. Oh, women, women! When will you cease to be blind? What advantage have you received from the Revolution? A more pronounced scorn, a more marked disdain. In the centuries of corruption you ruled only over the weakness of men. The reclamation of your patrimony, based on the wise decrees of nature-what have you to dread from such a fine undertaking? The *bon mot* of the legislator of the marriage of Cana? Do you fear that our French legislators, correctors of that morality, long ensnared by political practices now out of date, will only say again to you: women, what is there in common between you and us? Everything, you will have to answer. If they persist in their weakness in putting this non sequitur in contradiction to their principles, courageously oppose the force of reason to the empty pretensions of superiority; unite yourselves beneath the standards of philosophy; deploy all the energy of your character, and you will soon see these haughty men, not groveling at your feet as servile adorers, but proud to share with you the treasures of the Supreme Being. Regardless of what barriers confront you, it is in your power to free yourselves; you have only to want to....

Marriage is the tomb of trust and love. The married woman can with impunity give bastards to her husband, and also give them the wealth which does not belong to them. The woman who is unmarried has only one feeble right; ancient and inhuman laws refuse to her for her children the right to the name and the wealth of their father; no new laws have been made in this matter. If it is considered a paradox and an impossibility on my part to try to give my sex an honorable and just consistency, I leave it to men to attain glory for dealing with this matter; but while we wait, the way can be prepared through national education, the restoration of morals, and conjugal conventions.

Form for a Social Contract Between Man and Woman

We, _____ and _____, moved by our own will, unite ourselves for the duration of our lives, and for the duration of our mutual inclinations, under the following conditions: We intend and wish to make our wealth communal, meanwhile reserving to ourselves the right to divide it in favor of our children and of those toward whom we might have a particular inclination, mutually recognizing that our property belongs directly to our children, from whatever bed they come, and that all of them without distinction have the right to bear the name of the fathers and mothers who have acknowledged them, and we are charged to subscribe to the law which punishes the renunciation of one's own blood. We likewise obligate ourselves, in case of separation, to divide our wealth and to set aside in advance the portion the law indicates for our children, and in the event of a perfect union, the one who dies will divest himself of half his property in his children's favor, and if one dies childless, the survivor will inherit by right, unless the dying person has disposed of half the common property in favor of one whom he judged deserving.

That is approximately the formula for the marriage act I propose for execution. Upon reading this strange document, I see rising up against me the hypocrites, the prudes, the clergy, and the whole infernal sequence. But how it [my proposal] offers to the wise the moral means of achieving the perfection of a happy government! . . .

Moreover, I would like a law which would assist widows and young girls deceived by the false promises of a man to whom they were attached; I would like, I say, this law to force an inconstant man to hold to his obligations or at least [to pay] an indemnity equal to his wealth. Again, I would like this law to be rigorous against women, at least those who have the effrontery to have recourse to a law which they themselves had violated by their misconduct, if proof of that were given. At the same time, as I showed in *Le Bonheur primitif de l'homme*, in 1788, that prostitutes should be placed in designated quarters. It is not prostitutes who contribute the most to the depravity of morals, it is the women of society. In regenerating the latter, the former are changed. This link of fraternal union will first bring disorder, but in consequence it will produce at the end a perfect harmony.

I offer a foolproof way to elevate the soul of women; it is to join them to all the activities of man; if man persists in finding this way impractical, let him share his fortune with woman, not at his caprice, but by the wisdom of laws. Prejudice falls, morals are purified, and nature regains all her rights. Add to this the marriage of priests and the strengthening of the king on his throne, and the French government cannot fail.

From "Olympe de Gouges, 'Declaration of the Rights of Woman and Female Citizen,'" in Darline Gay Levy, H. Applewhite, and M. Johnson, eds., *Women in Revolutionary Paris, 1785-1795* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1979), pp. 92-96.

Abbé Sieyes: What is the Third Estate?

Emmanuel Joseph Sieyes: "What is the Third Estate? [Excerpts]"

What is necessary that a nation should subsist and prosper?

Individual effort and public functions.

All individual efforts may be included in four classes:

1. Since the earth and the waters furnish crude products for the needs of man, the first class, in logical sequence, will be that of all families which devote themselves to agricultural labor.
2. Between the first sale of products and their consumption or use, a new manipulation, more or less repeated, adds to these products a second value more or less composite. In this manner human industry succeeds in perfecting the gifts of nature, and the crude product increases two-fold, ten-fold, one hundred-fold in value. Such are the efforts of the second class.
3. Between production and consumption, as well as between the various stages of production, a group of intermediary agents establish themselves, useful both to producers and consumer; these are the merchants and brokers: the brokers who, comparing incessantly the demands of time and place, speculate upon the profit of retention and transportation; merchants who are charged with distribution, in the last analysis, either at wholesale or at retail. This species of utility characterizes the third class.
4. Outside of these three classes of productive and useful citizens, who are occupied with real objects of consumption and use, there is also need in a society of a series of efforts and pains, whose objects are directly useful or agreeable to the individual. This fourth class embraces all those who stand between the most distinguished and liberal professions and the less esteemed services of domestics.

Such are the efforts which sustain society. Who puts them forth? The Third Estate.

Public functions may be classified equally well, in the present state of affairs, under four recognized heads; the sword, the robe, the church and the administration. It would be superfluous to take them up one by one, for the purpose of showing that everywhere the Third Estate attends to nineteen-twentieths of them, with this distinction; that it is laden with all that which is really painful, with all the burdens which the privileged classes refuse to carry. Do we give the Third Estate credit for this? That this might come about, it would be necessary that the Third Estate should refuse to fill these places, or that it should be less ready to exercise their functions. The facts are well known. Meanwhile they have dared to impose a prohibition upon the order of the Third Estate. They have said to it: "Whatever may be your services, whatever may be your abilities, you shall go thus far; you may not pass beyond!" Certain rare exceptions, properly regarded, are but a mockery, and the terms which are indulged in on such occasions, one insult the more.

If this exclusion is a social crime against the Third Estate; if it is a veritable act of hostility, could it perhaps be said that it is useful to the public weal? Alas! who is ignorant of the effects of monopoly? If it discourages those whom it rejects, is it not well known that it tends to render less able those whom it favors? Is it not understood that every employment from which free competition is removed, becomes dear and less effective?

In setting aside any function whatsoever to serve as an appanage for a distinct class among citizens, is it not to be observed that it is no longer the man alone who does the work that it is necessary to reward, but all the unemployed members of that same caste, and also the entire families of those who are employed as well as those who are not? Is it not to be remarked that since the government has become the patrimony of a particular class, it has been distended beyond all measure; places have been created not on account of the

necessities of the governed, but in the interests of the governing, etc., etc.? Has not attention been called to the fact that this order of things, which is basely and--I even presume to say--beastly respectable with us, when we find it in reading the History of Ancient Egypt or the accounts of Voyages to the Indies, is despicable, monstrous, destructive of all industry, the enemy of social progress; above all degrading to the human race in general, and particularly intolerable to Europeans, etc., etc? But I must leave these considerations, which, if they increase the importance of the subject and throw light upon it, perhaps, along with the new light, slacken our progress.

It suffices here to have made it clear that the pretended utility of a privileged order for the public service is nothing more than a chimera; that with it all that which is burdensome in this service is performed by the Third Estate; that without it the superior places would be infinitely better filled; that they naturally ought to be the lot and the recompense of ability and recognized services, and that if privileged persons have come to usurp all the lucrative and honorable posts, it is a hateful injustice to the rank and file of citizens and at the same a treason to the public.

Who then shall dare to say that the Third Estate has not within itself all that is necessary for the formation of a complete nation? It is the strong and robust man who has one arm still shackled. If the privileged order should be abolished, the nation would be nothing less, but something more. Therefore, what is the Third Estate? Everything; but an everything shackled and oppressed. What would it be without the privileged order? Everything, but an everything free and flourishing. Nothing can succeed without it, everything would be infinitely better without the others.

It is not sufficient to show that privileged persons, far from being useful to the nation, cannot but enfeeble and injure it; it is necessary to prove further that the noble order does not enter at all into the social organization; that it may indeed be a burden upon the nation, but that it cannot of itself constitute a nation.

In the first place, it is not possible in the number of all the elementary parts of a nation to find a place for the caste of nobles. I know that there are individuals in great number whom infirmities, incapacity, incurable laziness, or the weight of bad habits render strangers to the labors of society. The exception and the abuse are everywhere found beside the rule. But it will be admitted that he less there are of these abuses, the better it will be for the State. The worst possible arrangement of all would be where not alone isolated individuals, but a whole class of citizens should take pride in remaining motionless in the midst of the general movement, and should consume the best part of the product without bearing any part in its production. Such a class is surely estranged to the nation by its indolence.

The noble order is not less estranged from the generality of us by its civil and political prerogatives.

What is a nation? A body of associates, living under a common law, and represented by the same legislature, etc.

Is it not evident that the noble order has privileges and expenditures which it dares to call its rights, but which are apart from the rights of the great body of citizens? It departs there from the common law. So its civil rights make of it an isolated people in the midst of the great nation. This is truly *imperium in imperia*.

In regard to its political rights, these also it exercises apart. It has its special representatives, which are not charged with securing the interests of the people. The body of its deputies sit apart; and when it is assembled in the same hall with the deputies of simple citizens, it is none the less true that its representation is essentially distinct and separate: it is a stranger to the nation, in the first place, by its origin, since its commission is not derived from the people; then by its object, which consists of defending not the general, but the particular interest.

The Third Estate embraces then all that which belongs to the nation; and all that which is not the Third Estate, cannot be regarded as being of the nation.

What is the Third Estate?

It is the whole.

St. Just- Republican Institutes

I challenge you to establish liberty so long as it remains possible to arouse the unfortunate classes against the new order of things, and I defy you to do away with poverty altogether unless each one has his own land. . . . Where you find large landowners you find many poor people. Nothing can be done in a country where agriculture is carried on on a large scale. Man was not made for the workshop, the hospital, or the poorhouse. All that is horrible. Men must live in independence, each with his own wife and his robust and healthy children. We must have neither rich nor poor.

The poor man is superior to government and the powers of the world; he should address them as a master. We must have a system which puts all these principles in practice and assures comfort to the entire people. Opulence is a crime : it consists in supporting fewer children, whether one's own or adopted, than one has thousands of francs of income. . . Children shall belong to their mother, provided she has suckled them herself, until they are five years old ; after that they shall belong to the republic until death. The mother who does not suckle her children ceases to be a mother in the eyes of the country. Child and citizen belong to the country, and a common instruction is essential. Children shall be brought up in the love of silence and scorn for fine talkers. They shall be trained in laconic speech. Games shall be prohibited in which they declaim, and they shall be habituated to simple truth.

The boys shall be educated, from the age of five to sixteen, by the country; from five to ten they shall learn to read, write, and swim. No one shall strike or caress a child. They shall be taught what is good and left to nature. He who strikes a child shall be banished. The children shall eat together and shall live on roots, fruit, vegetables, milk, cheese, bread, and water. The teachers of children from [Page 453] five to ten years old shall not be less than sixty years of age. . . . The education of children from ten to sixteen shall be military and agricultural.

Every man twenty-one years of age shall publicly state in the temples who are his friends. This declaration shall be renewed each year during the month Ventose. If a man deserts his friend, he is bound to explain his motives before the people in the temples; if he refuses, he shall be banished. Friends shall not put their contracts into writing, nor shall they oppose one another at law. If a man commits a crime, his friends shall be banished. Friends shall dig the grave of a deceased friend and prepare for the obsequies, and with the children of the deceased they shall scatter flowers on the grave. He who says that he does not believe in friendship, or who has no friends, shall be banned of ingratitude shall be banished. A man convicted of ingratitude shall be banished.

The French people recognize the existence of the Supreme Being and the immortality of the soul. The first day of every month is consecrated to the Eternal. Incense shall burn day and night in the temples and shall be tended in turn for twenty-four hours by the men who have reached the age of sixty. The temples shall never be closed. The French people devote their fortunes and their children to the Eternal. The immortal souls of all those who have died for the fatherland, who have been good citizens, who have cherished their father and mother and never abandoned them, are in the bosom of the Eternal.

The first day of the month Germinal the republic shall celebrate the festival of the Divinity, of Nature, and of the People; the first day of the month Floreal, the festival of the Divinity, of love, and of husband and wife, etc.[1]

[Page 454] Every year on the first day of Floreal the people of each commune shall select, from among the inhabitants of the commune, and in the temple, a young man rich and virtuous and without deformity, at least twenty-one years of age and not over thirty, who shall in turn select and marry a poor maiden, in everlasting memory of human equality.

Gracchus Babeuf- Manifesto of Equality

People of France!

For fifteen centuries you lived as a slave and, consequently, unhappy. For the last six years you barely breathe, waiting for independence, freedom and equality.

EQUALITY! The first wish of nature, the first need of man, the first knot of all legitimate association! People of France! You were not more blessed than the other nations that vegetate on this unfortunate globe! Everywhere and at all times the poor human race, handed over to more or less deft cannibals, served as an object for all ambitions, as feed for all tyrannies. Everywhere and at all times men were lulled with beautiful words; at no time and in no place was the thing itself ever obtained through the word. From time immemorial they hypocritically repeat; *all men are equal*,; and from time immemorial the most degrading and monstrous inequality insolently weighs upon the human race. As long as there have been human societies the most beautiful of humanity's rights is recognized without contradiction, but was only able to be put in practice one time: equality was nothing but a beautiful and sterile legal fiction. And now that it is called for with an even stronger voice we are answered: be quiet, you wretches! Real equality is nothing but a chimera; be satisfied with conditional equality; you're all equal before the law. What more do you want, filthy rabble? Legislators, you who hold power, rich landowners, it is now your turn to listen.

Are we not all equal? This principle remains uncontested, because unless touched by insanity, you can't say it's night when it's day.

Well then! We claim to live and die equal, the way we were born: we want this *real* equality or death; *that's* what we need.

And we'll have this real equality, at whatever price. Unhappy will be those who stand between it and us! Unhappy will be those who resist a wish so firmly expressed.

The French Revolution was nothing but a precursor of another revolution, one that will be bigger, more solemn, and which will be the last.

The people marched over the bodies of kings and priests who were in league against it: it will do the same to the new tyrants, the new political Tartuffes seated in the place of the old.

What do we need besides equality of rights?

We need not only that equality of rights written into the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen; we want it in our midst, under the roofs of our houses. We consent to everything for it, *to make a clean slate so that we hold to it alone*. Let all the arts perish, if need be, as long as real equality remains!

Legislators and politicians, you have no more genius than you do good faith; gutless and rich landowners, in vain you attempt to neutralize our holy enterprise by saying: They do nothing but reproduce that agrarian law asked for more than once in the past.

Slanderers, be silent: and in the silence of your confusion listen to our demands, dictated by nature and based on justice.

The Agrarian law, or the partitioning of land, was the spontaneous demand of some unprincipled soldiers, of some towns moved more by their instinct than by reason. We reach for something more sublime and more just: *the common good* or the *community of goods*! No more individual property in land: *the land belongs to no one*. We demand, we want, the common enjoyment of the fruits of the land: *the fruits belong to all*.

We declare that we can no longer put up with the fact that the great majority work and sweat for the smallest of minorities.

Long enough, and for too long, less than a million individuals have disposed of that which belongs to 20 million of their like, their equals.

Let it at last end, this great scandal that our descendants will never believe existed! Disappear at last, revolting distinctions between rich and poor, great and small, masters and servants, *rulers* and *ruled*.

Let there no longer be any difference between people than that of age and sex. Since all have the same faculties and the same needs, let there then be for them but one education, but one food. They are satisfied with one sun and one air for all: why then would the same portion and the same quality of food not suffice for each of them?

Already the enemies of the most natural order of things we can imagine raise a clamor against us.

They say to us: You are disorganizers and seditious; you want nothing but massacres and loot.

PEOPLE OF FRANCE:

We won't waste our time responding to them; we tell you: the holy enterprise that we are organizing has no other goal than to put an end to civil dissension and public misery.

Never before has a vaster plan been conceived of or carried out. Here and there a few men of genius, a few men, have spoken in a low and trembling voice. None have had the courage to tell the whole truth.

The moment for great measures has arrived. Evil has reached its height: it covers the face of the earth. Under the name of politics, chaos has reigned for too many centuries. Let everything be set in order and take its proper place once again. Let the supporters of justice and happiness organize in the voice of equality. The moment has come to found the REPUBLIC OF EQUALS, this great home open to all men. The day of general restitution has arrived. Groaning families, come sit at the common table set by nature for all its children.

PEOPLE OF FRANCE:

The purest of all glories was thus reserved for you! Yes it is you who the first should offer the world this touching spectacle.

Ancient habits, antique fears, would again like to block the establishment of the *Republic of Equals*. The organization of real equality, the only one that responds to all needs, without causing any victims, without costing any sacrifice, will not at first please everyone. The selfish, the ambitious, will tremble with rage. Those who possess unjustly will cry out about injustice. The loss of the enjoyments of the few, solitary pleasures, personal ease will cause lively regret to those heedless of the pain of others. The lovers of absolute power, the henchmen of arbitrary authority, will with difficulty bow their superb heads before the level of real equality. Their shortsightedness will understand with difficulty the imminent future of common happiness; but what can a few thousand malcontents do against a mass of happy men, surprised to have searched so long for a happiness that they had in their hands.

The day after this real revolution, they'll say with astonishment: What? Common happiness was so easy to obtain? All we had to do was want it? Why oh why didn't we desire it sooner? Did they really have to make us speak of it so many times? Yes, without a doubt, one lone man on earth richer, stronger than his like, than his equals, and the balance is thrown off: crime and unhappiness are on earth.

PEOPLE OF FRANCE;

By what sign will you now recognize the excellence of a constitution? ...That which rests in its entirety on real equality is the only one that can suit you and fulfill all your wishes.

The aristocratic charters of 1791 and 1795 tightened your chains instead of breaking them. That of 1793 was a great step towards true equality, and we had never before approached it so closely. But it did not yet touch the goal, nor reach common happiness, which it nevertheless solemnly consecrated as its great principle.

PEOPLE OF FRANCE,

Open your eyes and your hearts to the fullness of happiness: recognize and proclaim with us the
REPUBLIC OF EQUALS.